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ABSTRACT

A second-grade teacher implemented a practicum intervention designed to increase involvement of black parents in their children's educational and social development during the primary school years. Practicum goals were to improve social development of the students; increase the number of volunteers who had fulfilled city requirements; and increase parents' attendance at monthly PTA meetings and discussion and training sessions. Teacher and parent surveys revealed that teachers wanted parents to volunteer their services if the parents were first given workshops that would address school rules, classroom protocol, and volunteer responsibilities. Parents were interested in participating in school activities but either lacked the skills, felt intimidated, or did not recognize the need for their participation. The parent volunteer program that was implemented trained teachers and parents. Volunteers were provided with teaching strategies and instructional materials. Discussion sessions gave parents the opportunity to exchange information and ask questions. Practicum evaluation data indicated that outcomes were positive. The number of special, regular, and home-based volunteers increased. Students developed academically and socially due to increased instruction and attention from teachers and parents. Related materials are appended, including the results of teacher and parent surveys and sample activities calendars. (RH)

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Increasing Home and School Involvement of Parents of Primary Grade Students Through Communications, In-service Training, and Workshops

by

Milicent D. Russell

Cluster XXIV

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A Practicum II Report Presented to the Ed.D. Program
in Early and Middle Childhood
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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1989

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

Verifier: Jacqueline Carothers

Jacqueline Carothers

Principal

Title

Chicago, Illinois

Address

March 20, 1989
Date

This practicum report was submitted by Milicent D. Russell under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood and approved in partial fulfillment of rhe requirement for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

Date of Final Approval of Report

Georgianna Lowen, Ed.D., Adviser

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ABSTRACT

Increasing Home and School Improvement of Parents of Primary Grade Students Through Communications, Inservice Training, and Workshops. Russell, Milicent D., 1989: Practicum Report, Nova University, Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood. Descriptors: Parent Participation/Family Involvement/Parent Associations/ Parent Role/Parent School Relationship/Parent Conferences/Parent Influence/Volunteers/Volunteer Training/Primary Education

This practicum addressed the problem of lack of involvement by parents of primary grade students in their children's educational and social development. This lack of involvement was evidenced in the school and the home. The writer's goals were to: (1) increase the number of special volunteers; (2) increase the number of home-based volunteers; (3) increase the number of regular parent volunteers who have fulfilled the city's requirements; (4) improve the social development of the students; (5) increase parents' attendance at monthly PTA meetings; and (6) increase parent attendance at monthly discussion and training sessions. Results of teacher and parent surveys revealed that: teachers wanted parents to volunteer their services if they were given workshops that would address school rules, classroom protocol, and volunteer responsibilities; parents were interested in participating in school activities but either lacked the skills, felt intimidated, or had not recognized the need for their participation.

The writer implemented a parent volunteer program that would train teachers and parents. School and home based volunteers were given teaching strategies and instructional materials. Discussion sessions were held to provide the opportunity for parents to exchange information and ask questions.

The results of the practicum were positive. This volunteer program reached out to all parents. The number of special, regular, and home based volunteers increased. Students developed academically and socially because of the increased instruction and attention provided by teachers and parents.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

The community in which the writer is employed is 100 years old and has experienced many changes. Once a prominent and very stable area, the community now mainly consists of families in low and lower-middle socioeconomic strata. Although the community is comprised predominantly of single family homes, it is not uncommon, in particular areas, to have two or three families occupying one home. These areas are quite transient.

The community has many churches, a community hospital, a large public library, a shopping area, many small food franchises, and a park. There are few affordable activities available to the youths of the community.

Author's Work Setting and Role

The writer works in a large, inner-city elementary school. The student population of 1,137 is 100% Black. The school has two buildings. The primary building houses grades one through three; and the main building houses two preschool programs, one Head Start program, four kindergarten classes, and grades four through

eight.

The school is located in a lower socioeconomic environment. The vast majority of the students, 85%, come from families eligible for government programs such as free breakfasts and lunches. This eligibility is determined by the established criteria of governmental organizations.

The city's board of education establishes the standards and policies for the educational system. Actual implementation is carried out by the principal of each school under the supervision of administrators in the district offices. Local school improvement councils have come into more control within recent years. These councils must be apprised of the school budget by March of every year and must approve of the proposed budget.

The philosophy of the school stresses motivation, adequate time and practice, and pupil satisfaction. Teachers provide a caring and challenging atmosphere. Students are exposed to varied experiences to maximize effective learning. Parents are invited to participate in school activities in efforts to unite students, parents, and teachers.

The administration consists of one principal and two assistant principals. The assistants are housed in each of the school's two buildings. The full and half-time

guidance counselors share responsibilities. The reading resource teacher works with all students and teachers. Services are also provided by members of the ancillary staff which includes a speech therapist, social worker, school nurse, and truant officer.

The faculty is composed of 43 teachers. All are assigned according to their area of certification. There are 9 males and 34 females on the faculty. Of this number, 11 are Caucasian and 32 are Black. Thirty-six of the teachers have taught 10 years or more and 7 have taught 3 to 9 years. Nineteen teachers hold a master's degree or higher.

Academic classes are grouped heterogenously. The program for all students includes reading and skill development, English grammar and composition, spelling, writing, math, social studies, general science, music, art, library science, physical education, and health and safety. The teachers of grades one through six provide instruction in all academic areas with the exclusion of library science and physical education. Grades seven and eight are departmentalized as mandated by the city's board of education. Teachers in these grades are responsible for reading instruction in their assigned homerooms and instruction in one other subject area at their particular grade level.

Special programs include a computer lab for grades six through eight, five self-contained Chapter 1, federally funded classrooms, and five self-contained Chapter 1, state funded classrooms. These classrooms service students in grades one through five who are a year or more below grade level in reading and/or math. Placement is determined by the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. The school also has two federally funded pull-out programs for students in grades six through eight who are below level in reading skills. Programs are offered to those with learning disabilities through the two moderate to severe learning disability classes and the severe learning disability class. Speech therapy and guidance and counseling are available to students upon teacher recommendation.

The writer is a teacher who has worked with children in the primary grades for 16 years. Many of these years were with below average students. The writer holds an undergraduate degree in kindergarten-primary education and a master's degree in administration and supervision. The writer is certified through the state board of education in early childhood education and elementary teaching, kindergarten through grade nine. She is also state certified in administration and supervision, kindergarten through grade twelve. The writer is

certified by the city's board of education in early childhood and primary education and intermediate/upper education. She served as acting assistant principal in the primary department for one year.

The writer has been at her present work location for 8 years. She is currently a second grade teacher in a self-contained, federally funded program for low achieving students.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

In the writer's school, parents were not actively and effectively involved in the educational and social development of their children. This lack of involvement was evidenced in the home and school.

One component of the school's homework policy is to have parents review all assignments with their children, check and sign the papers, and make sure they are returned. Numerous informal discussions with the teachers revealed that this policy was not adhered to.

Teachers in the 16 primary classrooms stated that they had a few students, five or less, who never returned homework. Of the students who did return homework, the assignments were often incomplete, incorrect, and/or unsigned. In some instances, parents had signed these papers without taking the time to first review, then check for neatness, accuracy, and completion. The teachers reported that homework papers which were returned completed, corrected, and signed by parents were the exception rather than the rule. They reported an average of five parents per room adhering to the homework policy on a consistent basis.

Homework is an extension of daily activities and is an important role in students' academic growth. Homework provides students with additional opportunities for reinforcement, practice, or enrichment of the skills being taught in the classroom. It is also a means of communication with the parents. Parents who review homework with their children on a daily basis can monitor classroom activities as well as the progress of their children; they are partners with the school. Unfortunately, few parents had taken advantage of the partnership.

Another difficulty was that parents did not visit the school. Open house is held at the beginning of each school year. Teachers explain the curriculum for each grade level, discuss goals and objectives, and provide refreshments. Parents are invited to talk with teachers, browse around the school, examine books and materials, and observe teachers and students while classes are in progress.

The schedule of open house for each grade level is advertised in three ways: (a) the principal sends the schedule to the parents through a newsletter; (b) teachers write invitations to all their parents reminding them of the date and time; and, (c) teachers also encourage their students to bring their parents to

school on this day. Despite these attempts, parent response had been extremely poor. Of the 150 second-grade students enrolled at the time of the 1987 open house, only one parent came. The same held true for the third grade open house. First grade teachers experienced a better response, but not what was anticipated.

Report card pick-up days are held in the fall and spring of each year. These pick-up days are mandated by the city's board of education. Parents or legal guardians are required to get their children's report cards and are invited to have a conference with the teacher. Teachers remain in their classrooms until six o'clock in the evening to provide ample opportunity for parents to visit. Those parents or guardians who are unable to visit are asked to make appointments with the teacher at their convenience.

One week following the spring pick-up day, 24% of the parents of primary students in grades 1 through 3 had yet to pick up their children's report cards or make appointments for a conference. In many instances, these report cards were held until the end of the year and then sent home with the students.

If a student is in jeopardy of receiving a low grade or failing a subject, a notice is sent to his/her

parents. Parents are to designate a day and time for a parent-teacher conference, sign, and return the notice. Notices were often sent two or three times, through the students and the mail, to no avail.

Attendance at the monthly parent-teacher association (PTA) meetings was usually less than 15. This number included the officers of the PTA. Teachers did not attend the meetings because they were generally held in the mornings during class time.

Monthly assembly programs have received a favorable response. A minimum of three classes performs at each assembly. As many as 40 parents have been in attendance. Parents are invited to visit with their children after the performance and then share in refreshments.

The final problem was in keeping the primary students motivated and maintaining discipline. Teachers had expressed concern about their mounting responsibilities. They are accountable for the educational and social development of their students and felt that they lacked the cooperation, support, and assistance of the parents.

The problem had not been solved because too few positive activities were held for the parents. Parents did not feel comfortable when visiting the school to

discuss the academic progress or behavior of their children. Those parents who had expressed interest did not know how to help their children at home or the teachers in school. There had been no one to meet with these parents, provide in-service training, teach them strategies that they could use at home and school, or organize them in school activities and learning situations.

Briefly stated then, the problem was that parents were not actively and effectively involved in the education and social development of their children in the home or in the school. This problem was evidenced by the lack of parent participation in school and home activities.

Problem Documentation

The writer solicited the cooperation of the primary teachers, the PTA president, the assistant principal, and the parents. A survey was given to each teacher. Each teacher was requested to answer questions pertaining to parent involvement as it applied to his or her own class. Sixteen surveys were distributed and 14 were returned. This represents a return rate of 88%.

Nine of the questions were open-ened and one was answered on a continuum. A sample survey and the

results are provided in Appendix A.

The first question asked teachers the number of different parents who volunteered to assist in the room or field trips within the past school year. Teachers reported numbers ranging from 0 to 10. Approximately 43 different parents have visited the primary grades within the past year.

The second question asked about the various activities parents performed in the room. Seven different activities were listed. Of these, the activity most often performed was accompanying the class on field trips. Seven of the 14 teachers stated that this was the only time parents volunteered to come to the school. These teachers accounted for 20 of the 43 parents. Other activities mentioned by the teachers were: making or putting up bulletin boards; helping with classroom parties; assisting teacher with lunchroom or bathroom duties; watching the class; organizing activity centers; and, filing or grading papers.

Question three asked how often the parents came. Seven teachers asnwered that parents only came on the day of a field trip. One teacher responded everyday, and another responded never. The remaining four teachers gave vague answers such as: not often, a few times, when needed, or frequently. One teacher did not

respond at all to the question.

Responses to question four, concerning the length of each visit, ranged from 20 to 60 minutes. One teacher noted that she would not want a volunteer for more than an hour at a time on a given visit.

The fifth question asked the teachers if they had encountered any problems with the volunteers. This question did not apply for the teacher who never had any volunteers. Twelve teachers said that no problems occurred, and one teacher responded that she had encountered problems. She found that parents were not willing to do what they were asked and that some parents only wanted to visit with other volunteers.

Responses to the next question revealed that 13 of the 14 teachers would be comfortable with a parent volunteer in the classroom. Only one teacher responded negatively, citing that parents did not understand the classroom activities and procedures. Surprisingly, the teacher who responded negatively was not the one who had encountered problems with the parent volunteers or the one who had no volunteers for the entire year.

Teachers were next asked to give possible reasons for the lack of parent volunteers. The reason given most often, by six teachers, was that parents were not interested. Employment and parents' self-consciousness

because of limited education were each mentioned by five teachers. Laziness was the reason given by four teachers, and having young children to care for at home was mentioned by three teachers. Poor teacher-parent relationships was mentioned twice. Being unable to commit to a regular schedule and time, poor communications from top administrators, and the fact that education was not a priority were each mentioned once. Comments written by many teachers exposed negative attitudes toward the parents and low expectations of their potential.

On a scale of one--not important-- to four--crucial--teachers were asked to circle the number which most closely represented their attitude toward parents volunteering in the school. Three teachers felt volunteers were important, eight felt volunteers were very important, and the remaining three teachers felt volunteers were crucial.

The ninth statement asked teachers to list the activities they would like volunteers to perform in their rooms. Thirteen different activities were given. These included, in order from highest number of responses to lowest: tutoring individuals or small groups of students in reading, math, or spelling; assisting teachers with lunch, recess, or bathroom

duties; decorating bulletin boards or the classroom activity centers; correcting papers or workbooks; filing papers and tests in student folders; reading to students; and, accompanying the class on field trips. Activities that were mentioned by only one or two teachers included: watching the classroom, maintaining records, assisting with classroom parties, contacting hard to reach parents, observing the work habits of students, and, photocopying materials for teachers.

The final statement requested the teachers to list ways in which the students, teachers, parents, and/or school could benefit from a volunteer program. The answer given most often, eight times, was that teachers and parents could provide additional time for the students. Four teachers responded that parents would become excellent role models for their children and other parents. Each of the following responses were provided by three teachers. The school would improve its relationship with the community, students would become aware of the parent-teacher partnership, and, behavior problems would decrease. Two teachers noted that parents would learn new ways of helping and teaching their children. Parents understanding of the learning process and recruiting of other parents were each mentioned by one teacher.

The writer next sought the cooperation of the PTA president. Information on the number of parents in attendance at each of the PTA meetings for the 1987-1988 school year was supplied. Table 1 depicts the number of parents, including PTA officers, who were in attendance.

Table 1

Number of Parents Attending Monthly PTA Meetings for the 1987-1988 School Year

Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June
--	--	20	40	4	14	9	28	5	--

There were no PTA meetings held the months of September, October, and June. Attendance at the November meeting was high because of a problem that occurred at the school. The ceiling in one of the classrooms had fallen in and a few of the other classrooms experienced leaking. The parents were concerned about the poor condition of the roof and met to determine what could be done about the situation.

Attendance at the December meeting was extremely high in comparison with the other months. This was a special meeting in which the District Superintendent and the Supervisor of Engineers were invited to address the parents regarding the condition of the roof and the necessary steps for its repair.

January's meeting was a general PTA meeting.

Attendance was extremely low. Election of officers for the local school improvement council were held in February. During the month of March, three of the primary students were struck by cars. The alderman of the ward in which the school is located was invited to March's PTA meeting to discuss the possibility of closing off traffic from in front of the school for 10 minutes prior to the entrance of the students in the morning and following dismissal in the afternoon. Only 14 parents were in atendance at this meeting. The streets were not closed off to traffic.

The District PTA meeting was held at the school in April. Principals from all the schools in the district attended this meeting. This accounts for the high number for April's PTA meeting.

A general PTA meeting was held in May. Again, the number in attendance was low. Results of the record keeping of the number of parents who attended monthly PTA meeting confirm the fact that parents do not visit the school.

The assistant principal allowed the writer to examine the file of discipline referrals submitted by primary teachers for the 1987-1988 school year. One hundred fifty referrals were submitted resulting in approximately 30 suspensions. The number of referrals

and suspensions of children in grades 1 through 3 substantiates that the students were not motivated, teachers found it increasingly more difficult to maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning, and, there was a need for the school community to reach out and solicit the aid of the parents.

Of the 38 parents who have completed the volunteer requirements mandated by the city's board of education, only 9 have volunteered their services on a regular basis. Once students leave preschool and Head Start, where parent involvement is required, parents cease to be active participants in the education of their children.

Parents were surveyed during the spring report card pick-up to determine the number who were interested in becoming volunteers. A survey was provided for each classroom teacher and was kept with the parent sign-in sheet to ensure visibility. A copy of the survey (see Appendix B) was also posted on the counter in the office. A total of 18 surveys were distributed and 16 were returned. This represents a return rate of 89%.

Of the 253 parents who visited the school in the spring for report cards and conferences, 43 signed the survey, expressing their interest in a volunteer program. The majority of these parents talked to the

writer about their interests and concerns. They expressed the desire to participate in school activities. However, many felt unwelcomed, intimidated, and insecure because they did not know how to help their children or the teachers.

Causative Analysis

The problem had six major causes. One cause was that parents lacked the necessary skills to assist their children. Many parents expressed this concern in informal discussions with the writer and other teachers.

A second major cause of the problem was that parents felt intimidated when conversing with teachers about the academic progress of their children or their behavior. Parents did not always understand the educational terms used by teachers, exactly what the problem was, or how they could correct the problem. Teachers usually communicated with parents when there was a problem with a child, seldom when the child experienced achievement.

The third major cause was the low expectations of teachers on how parents could be used in the classroom setting. Teachers desired the parents to perform menial tasks and duties that they disliked doing. They could

not perceive parents as decision makers and partners in the education of their children. Teachers believed that parents were not able to work directly with students because many lack college educations.

Another major cause of the problem was poor communication between school and home. The city's board of education provides every teacher a curriculum overview chart with specific objectives to be taught in each of the study areas. This information had not been given to the parents on a systematic basis.

Written communications concerning strategies parents could employ at home to assist in their children's academic performance had been poor. Teachers informed parents of various strategies during parent-teacher conferences, but no attempt had been made to ensure that all the parents received the same information.

The final major cause of the problem was that no efforts had been initiated to organize, implement, and maintain a parent volunteer program beyond the preschool and Head Start classes. Parents came to school in the mornings with their children, sat in the parents' lounge for an hour, and then went home. They did not know who they could assist or how. Unless a teacher or an administrator specifically asked for their help, the parents felt helpless and omitted from everyday school

activities despite their availability.

The Related Literature

A review of the related literature revealed that a parent volunteer program positively affects students, teachers, parents, and the community. Numerous strategies which could be beneficial in increasing parent involvement at home and in the school were suggested.

Before any volunteer program can be developed and implemented, the concerns of all those involved must be addressed. Comer (1986) recognized that the major obstacles to meaningful parent participation in schools has been the inadequate response of the schools and governments to scientific and technological changes in society. He stated that these changes brought social changes as well as changes in the relationship between home and school. The level of trust and agreement has decreased. Comer suggested it was time to make an institutional adjustment which would once again restore the power of parents, teachers, and administrators to help students.

Topping (1987) asserted that parents were not given detailed guidance on how to help their children. In his study, Topping found that teachers worried about

misguided parents harming rather than aiding their children's development. Teachers were found to be doubtful and resentful of parent interference.

Haley (1985) noted that there were not enough volunteers to fill teacher requests, the range of activities was very limited, and there was high absenteeism among volunteers. She suggested that school coordinators omitted the necessary techniques to maintain a volunteer program. These techniques included orientation, training, effective utilization of volunteers, and evaluation of the volunteer program.

Epstein (1986) indicated that little research had been conducted to link specific teachers' practices with parents who experienced them. Epstein cited two opposing theories of school and family relations. One perspective emphasized the incompatibility, competition, and conflict between families and schools. This theory supports the separation of the two institutions. The second perspective emphasized coordination, cooperation, and complementarity of schools and families. This theory encourages communication and collaboration between the two institutions.

A study conducted by John Hopkins University (1985) revealed that teachers believed parent involvement was good, but many experienced difficulty when they tried to

implement practices. The study found that teachers agreed on two points: parent involvement helped solve problems faced by schools, and it helped increase involvement at home.

Amundson (1982), Bristor (1987), Dolly, Page, and Digieso (1981), the Oklahoma State Department of Education (1982), and Perez (1985) disclosed possible reasons why parents did not volunteer their time and services in the schools or at home. Amundson stated that many parents believed once the child entered school, the only real learning took place inside the school building.

Bristor asserted that parents felt that only the specially trained could do a particular job well. The parents' lack of knowing how to help may have been the obstacle that kept them from assisting in their children's education at home.

Dolly et al. expressed that parents did not volunteer their services because they thought their children did not need remediation. This belief stemmed from the fact that schools consistently sent information home which stated children were doing well.

The Oklahoma State Department of Education in its guide for teachers, stressed the importance of teachers conveying to parents the feeling that the school wanted

and needed parent involvement. The guide assessed possible causes of parents not becoming active in the schools. These causes are that parents lacked the self-confidence of knowing how to help and some parents felt uncomfortable in reaching out to the school.

Perez discovered that because of lack of time, younger children, employment, or lack of awareness, parents, previously involved in the Head Start program, were not actively involved in their children's education beyond that point.

Cherry (1980) cited many reasons for parents volunteering time in the schools. Of these, the most common were parental concern for the quality of education their children received, the quest for work experience, friendship with school personnel or other parents, and personal satisfaction and accomplishment.

Lapides and Lapides (1981) found that parents who were involved in school activities were more sensitive to children's social, emotional, and intellectual developmental needs. These parents were more accepting of their children, more affectionate, used more complex language, encouraged their children to verbalize more,and reasoned more with children. Lapides and Lapides stated that involved parents were more aware of the causes of children's distress, found children more

interesting and enjoyable, pursued their own educational development, and used community agencies more.

Yawkey and Silvern (1976) observed that only recently have teachers and parents earnestly sought ways to develop and effectively implement parent and teacher involvement. This was due to growing national interest in child development and preschool education, the changing attitude about what is good for the young child, modern technology which freed mothers from household chores, and the Women's Liberation Movement which helped influence mothers to join the work force.

McLaughlin and Shields (1987) examined ways to motivate teachers and administrators to try new practices and strategies. These practices and strategies are necessary to bring about the changes neeeded to encourage parent involvement in the schools.

Several authors stressed the importance of a cooperative and trusting home-school relationship. Long (1982) reported that parents and teachers must have a close relationship with one another, trust each other, and have the best interest of the child in mind. She noted that parents were aware that they needed more information to deal effectively with their children's school experience. Teachers must change attitudes to include rather than exclude parents.

Van Cleaf (1979) indicated that home and school experienced difficulty for providing their important functions without support and understatnding of one another. The lack of understanding between attitudes of parents and school staff concerning appropriate teaching methods interfered with the development of a positive relationship between school and home.

Suchara (1982) stated that schools continued to be targets of critics and citizen activists. Relationships among parents, teachers, and children reflected composites of motivation and expectations. It was essential to recognize these composites and their potential for either negatively affecting the efforts of home and school or systematically building confidence in the home-school relationship.

Rich (1985) found that parent involvement must be viewed as a legitimate activity in the school. Reaching the family must be as important as reaching the children.

London (1984) believed that many school problems related to all participants. These participants were the institutions, families, students, teachers, and the community. Problems required solutions based on approaches that called for trust and sensitivity. London observed that maintaining supportive

home-school-community relationships had become difficult because of the many circumstances thich interfered with those processes. These circumstances included conflict between parents and teachers, the inaccessibility of schools, the general lack of responsiveness to the communities they serve, the conflicting thoughts of parents about their proper place in relation to schools, and the teachers' view of the school as their domain.

One way to build a strong home-school relationship is through positive and consistent communication. Ford (1979) reported that PTA meetings, parent-teacher conferences, and yearly open houses were not enough and not well enough attended to ensure adequate communication.

Podsen (1984) asserted that parents assumed children had good study habits because of their grades. No news from the school generally meant good news about the child's educational development.

Foyle (1986) recognized that the link that homework provides between home and school can be made more positive if teachers and administrators ensured that the homework was clear, meaningful, varied, and regularly assigned. Homework could be a positive public relations message.

Maurer (1985) indicated that getting parents to

visit school was an old and widespread problem. Parent involvement is essential in creating effective schools. Maurer realized that parents were more likely to come to hear good things about their children.

Pawlas (1985) described ways school personnel could effectively communicate to parents. His suggestions included the written word, telephone calls, and monthly principal's newsletters.

Two authors addressed the issue of recruitment. Johnson, Gurnogh, Bell, and Estroff (1977) recognized the lack of information on alternative methods of recruiting, training, and evaluating volunteers. They expressed concern about whom to recruit and how, who should do the recruiting, should there be qualifications for volunteers, which teachers should use volunteers, and how many hours per visit. Questions were also posed concerning who would conduct the training sessions, should they be for teachers and volunteers, who would evaluate the volunteers and on what basis.

Novatis (1986) stressed that teachers, parents,, and students must benefit from a parent involvement program. Many suggestions were offered on how to recruit parents and implement a successful program. Suggestions for recruitment included an introductory letter and a parent questionnaire.

Three writers expressed the need for training sessions. Heimberger (1978) stated that time spent in meaningful preparation was essential if parents were to be effective.

Halasa (1983) evaluated a Reading Impact Project in which funding was provided for parent workshops. Janoff and Meiers (1977) investigated whether parent training, teacher training, and training of paraprofessionals could be employed in a school setting at a low cost, with minimal disruption to curriculum and school personnel. These training sessions were investigated to determine if they could bring about specific behavioral changes in the home and/or school environments of children.

Implementation of a parent volunteer program occurs for various reasons. The related literature revealed some interesting strategies for getting parents involved. Heath (1984) detailed how his school successfully involved parents in the education of their children. In order to enroll in the school, parents signed a contract agreeing to contribute a specified amount of time for each child enrolled.

Gonzales (1980) developed a children's author center. She described ways in which the parents helped students with their books.

Garvey (1983) evaluated a project which promoted the development of disadvantaged childrens basic learning skills. She planned to accomplish this through successful school experiences.

Taranto (1982) noted that a statewide volunteer program was brought about because of the demand for accountability in public education, a need for information about quality programs, and a desire to be involved in carrying them out. Citizens reached a political level of concern which persuaded the state legislature to back the volunteer movement and provide funding for the operation and administration of a statewide program.

The Oklahoma State Department of Education (1985) published a resource guide for parent involvement which offered numerous suggestions for getting parents actively involved. The most important of these suggestions was to make parents feel welcome.

Gordon, Olmsted, Rubin, and True (1978) cited the many different roles of parents. Parents are teachers of their own children, paid paraprofessionals, decision makers and policy advisors, adult learners of new skills, recipients of information, and volunteers in classrooms.

True and Ehda (1980) recognized the three types of

volunteers. Regular volunteers were able to volunteer services at a regular time on a scheduled day. Special volunteers served as substitutes of did special activities. Homebound parents served as babysitters, made materials, typed, made phone calls, and wrote invitations.

Benson and Ross (1972) believed that parent volunteers could be trained to become teacher aides. Hankerson (1983) conducted a study which focused on two aspects of the significance of parents as teacher aides. The first related to the problem of satisfying the educational requirements in communities which had large numbers of educationally and socially disadvantaged, underachieving children. The second aspect related to the approach of new career innovations to improve the community through the incorporation of paraprofessional corps.

Plumb and Burrow (1986) described and evaluated a tutoring program which involved paraprofessionals or supervised students. Beluschak (1985) in her study, realized that teachers did not have enough time to provide all the children the remedial and enrichment excercises within the allocated time and still introduce, develop, and test other math topics. She observed that new students were constantly enrolling,

teachers were without aides, there were no pull out programs, and an abundance of clerical work. Beluschak suggested having parents become involved with the remediation and enrichment of children.

Walters and Gunderson (1985) reported that teachers of English as a Second Language (ESL) students were not reading to their students in their native tongue. They invited parents to read aloud to primary students and ask comprehension questions.

In conclusion, a review of the related literature revealed many aspects of a parent volunteer program. Teachers who strive to improve the performance of students and build strong home-school relationships will benefit in many ways including the academic achievement of students and the support of active and effective parents.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Statement of General Goals

There were two goals for this practicum. The first goal was to encourage the parents of primary students to become actively involved, at home and school, in their children's educational and social development. The second goal was to provide training sessions for parents to assist them in gaining the skills, self-confidence, and support needed to help their children.

Behavioral Expectations

The writer chose the first four behavioral objectives based upon results of the Teacher Survey, Parent Survey, and an analysis of the literature. The fifth and sixth behavioral objectives were chosen to achieve the second goal of this practicum as stated in the previous section. Therefore, the following specific behavioral objectives were chosen for this practicum.

1. Over a period of 24 weeks, the number of special volunteers, those who volunteer their services upon request, will increase from 9 to 20 parents as measured by a teacher-made questionnaire to be given at the end of implementation.

2. Over a period of 24 weeks, approximately 150 (50%) of the parents of children in grades 1 through 3 will have tried 25 learning activities at home as measured by a teacher-made questionnaire to be given at the end of implementation.

3.a. Over a period of 24 weeks, a minimum of 15 parents will have fulfilled the city's board of education requirements for parent volunteers as measured by the official volunteer forms provided by the board of education and kept in the office of each school.

b. Over a period of 24 weeks, these 15 parents will commit to a schedule, volunteering one hour per week for 15 of 20 weeks of actual implementation as measured by a teacher-made Volunteer Sign-in/Activities sheet to be completed by the volunteers and kept by the writer throughout the implementation period.

4. Over a period of 24 weeks, discipline referrals, submitted by teachers, will decrease by ten percent from the previous year as measured by the number of referrals kept on file in the assistant principal's office at the end of the implementation period.

5. Over a period of 24 weeks, the number of parents in attendance at monthly PTA meetings will increase to 30 parents per meeting as measured by an attendance record to be maintained by the PTA president at each PTA meeting.

6.a. Over a period of 24 weeks, 15 parent volunteers will attend four of the five monthly discussion sessions as measured by an attendance record to be maintained by the writer throughout the implementation period.

b. Over a period of 24 weeks, 15 parent volunteers will attend four of the five monthly training sessions as measured by an attendance record to be maintained by the writer throughout the implementation period.

Evaluation Instruments

The first and second objectives were to be measured by a teacher-made questionnaire composed of seven questions. These seven questions determined whether or not parents were scheduled or special volunteers, whether parents had volunteered any time at the school, the number of visits, the activities performed at school, whether or not parents used the monthly activities calendars, the approximate number of activities that were tried, and their opinion of the calendars. The questionnaire was to be given at the end of the implementation period.

The third objective was to be measured by the official volunteer forms, issued by the city's board of education, and a teacher-made Volunteer Sign-in/Activities Sheet. The official forms are kept on file in the school office once the parent has received the results of a tuberculosis test and has been interviewed by the school principal. The Volunteer Sign-in/Activities Sheet determined the number of parents who kept their commitment and the types of

services provided by the volunteers. These sheets were collected at the end of each day during the implementation period.

The fourth objective was to be measured by the number of discipline referrals submitted by teachers during the current school year. They were to be tallied at the end of the implementation period. Students who were exposed to role models, given individual instruction and attention, given praise and awards, and encouraged to do their best by concerned and involved parents both at home and at school would be more motivated to behave positively. This would result in a decrease in discipline referrals from the previous year.

The fifth objective was to be measured by an attendance record. Parents who felt welcomed and secure in visiting the school, were invited to meetings and special events, received frequent and positive communications, and were informed of organizations that would allow them to become decision-makers would be more inclined to join school organizations. This would result in an increase in attendance at monthly PTA meetings.

The sixth objective was also to be measured by an attendance record. Parents who were truly committed to

a student-parent-teacher relationship would be interested in learning strategies that would assist them and their children both at home and school. Therefore, attendance at monthly discussion and training sessions would be expected.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

A review of the literature disclosed many methods which could be adapted to develop, implement, and maintain a program to increase parent involvement. Although teachers are knowledgeable of the many positive effects of a parent volunteer program, genuine concerns, as well as subtle, negative comments, were constantly reiterated. The result was that teachers did not reach out to parents as often as they could have. A parent volunteer program that incorporated the solutions of other writers who faced the same problems needed to be implemented.

One possible solution to the lack of parent involvement in the home and school was better communication between the two institutions. Long (1982), Novatis (1986), and Pawlas (1985) examined methods of communication between school and home that were consistent and effective. Among the methods were the written word, telephone calls, newsletter, super reader, comments on report card envelopes, school improvement councils, and school visits/lunch with

children.

Amundson (1982), Halasa (1983), and Suchara (1982) urged the use of newsletters with parent tips to reinforce skills at home. Bristor (1987) suggested pamphlets and calendars with daily activities for parents to use at home. Foyle (1986) stated that regularly assigned, clearly stated, and varied homework assignments ensure a positive link between school and home.

A second possible solution to the lack of parent involvement in the home and school was a home based volunteer program. Changes in today's economy have forced many women out of the home and into the work field. A home based volunteer program was, therefore, as important as a school based program. Yawkey and Silvern (1976) offered teaching strategies to parents and made frequent evaluations to determine if the strategies were being tried.

Heimberger (1978) encouraged parents to continue their family's cultural appreciation. This could be accomplished by telling stories of the family history and having all family members prepare for and celebrate holidays.

London (1984) indicated that parents were responsible for their children's behavior. He believed

in a reconstructive approach to discipline in which parents take the initiative in instilling a sense of responsibility in their children. He also stressed that parents must work with the schools toward this end.

Podsen (1984) outlined steps for promoting good study habits. She suggested that parents set a schedule and adhere to it, turn off the television and play games, talk to their children, and confer with teachers at the very beginning of the school year.

Topping (1987) encouraged parents to listen to their children read. He also suggested that parents attend workshops to learn reading techniques.

A third possible solution to the lack of parent involvement in the home and school was raising the expectations of teachers and other school personnel. Many authors stressed the importance of workshops for teachers. Cherry (1980), Gonzales (1980), and Walters and Gunderson (1985) recommended inviting parents to participate in one specific activity such as reading to students or sharing hobbies and occupations.

Beluschak (1985), McLaughlin and Shields (1987), Perez (1985), and Plumb and Burrow (1986) stressed the importance of teacher in-services. The purpose of these in-services was to motivate teachers to try new practices and to assist them in selecting activities for

volunteers.

School personnel must be aware of the numerous activities parent volunteers can perform. Cherry (1980), Gonzales (1980), Johnson et al. (1977), Lapides and Lapides (1981), Mauer (1985), and the Oklahoma State Department of Education (1985) listed activities for parent volunteers. These included: typing, photocopying materials, tracing patterns, making games, writing newsletter, cutting out materials, collecting and organizing materials, listening to children read, making bulletin boards, using audiovisual equipment, teaching students to use audiovisual equipment, tutoring, assisting in cafeteria, housekeeping duties, sharpening pencils, toileting, reading to class, assisting with record keeping, and, assisting on field trips.

A fourth possible solution to the lack of parent involvement in the home and school was the implementation of parent workshops. Guidelines must be established for any volunteer program. Volunteers must be aware of: classroom protocol, various activities for tutoring individuals and small groups, program objectives, and, activities to reinforce skills at home.

Beluschak (1985), Benson and Ross (1972), Bristor

(1987), Epstein (1986), Ford (1979), Halasa (1983), Heimberger (1978), Perez (1985), Suchara (1982), True and Ehda (1980), and Yawkey and Silvern (1976) strongly encouraged that parents attend an orientation workshop before being assigned to classrooms. Workshops should be held on a regular basis for parents to discuss and exchange ideas, ask questions, offer suggestions, and make materials to use at school and home.

Lapides and Lapides (1981) and McLaughlin and Shields (1987) stressed that these workshops and meetings be held at a time that was convenient to the parents.' This is done to encourage their participation.

The final possible solution to the lack of parent involvement in the home and school was to make parents feel they were welcome and needed. Parents would be encouraged to volunteer their services if they felt their involvement was an integral part of the educational system. Cherry (1980), Johnson et al. (1977), and Yawkey and Silvern (1976) expressed their beliefs that parents should be allowed the opportunities to participate in decision-making policies. Teachers should be willing to accept differing ideas. Parents should be informed of and encouraged to join local advisory councils.

True and Ehda (1980) stated that parents should be made to feel welcome when visiting school personnel to ask questions. They suggested inviting parents to mini courses on many subjects to explain what teachers are doing and why they teach the way they do.

Suchara (1982) suggested that teachers and students send letters of appreciation to parent volunteers. Taranto (1982) noted that in the statewide parent volunteer program, the Commissioner of Education presented awards to those volunteers who exhibited exemplary service.

These solutions are sound and feasible. They are creative strategies because most have not been employed by the teachers in the writer's work setting. These solutions have addressed each of the problems as they presently exist. These solutions can be easily adapted and are critical to achieving the writer's goals and objectives as they are presented in this practicum.

Description of Selected Solutions

The solution to the problem of parents not being actively and effectively involved in the education and social development of their children in the home or school was based on the strategies which were suggested and evaluated as possible solutions. The solution was

to develop and implement a parent volunteer program that would encourage parents of primary grade students to become more active in both the home and school. This would be accomplished through a combination and adaptation of the strategies to meet the needs, goals, and objectives of the writer.

This solution was the most appropriate. The strategies suggested in the possible solutions addressed the problem situation, characteristics, and causes, which were explained in Chapter II.

Although a few of the strategies had been used successfully by the teachers in the writer's work setting, most had not. This solution was creative and unique in the writer's setting.

The writer believed this solution would satisfy the goals and objectives because specific strategies were suggested that addressed each part of the problem. These strategies were feasible, could be easily implemented in the writer's work setting, and would provide numerous benefits to the students, teachers, and parents.

To address the objective of the writer to increase the number of special volunteers, the writer chose the following strategies: workshops and meetings for teachers, consistent and positive communications from

school to home, lists of activities for parent volunteers provided for the teachers, assist teachers in selecting activities for volunteers, and oral and written invitations to parents to participate in a given activity.

Teachers needed to be made aware of the various activities in which parents can be included. The writer met with the teachers throughout the implementation period to offer suggestions on how they could reach out to their parents. One specific purpose of the meetings was to reinforce positive attitudes toward parent volunteers.

Teachers were also advised of the benefits of positive communications from school to home. The writer provided each teacher with awards which were applicable to numerous situations. These awards could be photocopied. She also encouraged the use of colorful stickers. These positive communications fulfilled three purposes. Students experienced a sense of pride, attempted to achieve more awards or stickers, and were anxious to take the communications home to share with their parents. Parents, therefore, heard from teachers regularly concerning accomplishments and good behavior.

The writer suggested that teachers invite parents to special activities. Parties, assemblies, culminating

activities, and field trips are enjoyable activities that parents could participate in and feel at ease. Although these activities are usually printed in the principal's monthly newsletter, teachers were encouraged to write a personal invitation or have their students write one.

To address the objective of the writer for more parents to help their children in learning activities at home, the writer chose the following strategies: make-and-take workshops; clearly stated, varied, and regularly assigned homework; monthly activities calendars; suggestions for good study habits, and encouragement to parents to listen to their children read.

It is impossible to expect that every parent will become a volunteer in the school. Therefore the writer incorporated strategies that would involve parents at home. One such strategy was the make-and-take workshops. Invitations were extended to all parents of primary students each month. The writer provided all the materials to make different learning activities and games. The parents were allowed to take these activities and games to use at home.

The second strategy was to involve parents in their children's homework. The writer reminded teachers to

carefully select homework assignments that were clearly stated and varied. Homework was to be regularly assigned, corrected, and returned. Parents were asked to assist their children each evening, sign the papers, and make sure the assignments were returned . The writer also sent suggestions for the development of good study habits to each parent.

Students are tested at the end of each ten week marking period on specific reading and math objectives. The tests are state mandated. To further involve the parents in their children's learning activities, the writer developed monthly activities calendars for first through third grade. The calendars stated the specific objectives and provided activities for each school day, Monday through Friday. Each Saturday had suggestions for "Fun Things To Do," and Sundays had suggestions for interesting "Places to Go." Sample monthly activities calendars are provided in Appendix C.

To address the objective of the writer to increase the number of parents who commit to a schedule, the writer chose the following strategies: parent workshops, parent meetings to exchange ideas and ask questions, matching of parents' abilities and desires with teachers' needs, making parents feel wanted and needed, providing opportunities for parents to

participate in decision-making, writing letters of appreciation, and presenting awards.

It was the desire of the writer and teachers to have parents who would commit to a schedule. To maintain parent commitment, it is important that parents feel welcome and needed. It is just as important for parents to feel secure and successful in the activities they are asked to perform. The writer provided make-and-take workshops on a monthly basis to allow parents the opportunity to make learning games and other instructional materials. Parents could then use these materials when tutoring small groups or individual students.

Discussion meetings were also held once a month. The purpose of these meetings was to have the parents share information about what they were doing in the classrooms. Parents were encouraged to tell what activities did or did not work and to ask questions. The writer offered teaching and discipline strategies to aid the parents.

The writer was interested in making the parents feel secure and successful in all their endeavors. Each volunteer parent completed a survey of their interests and talents (see Appendix D). The survey was shared with the particular teacher whom the volunteer chose to

assist. This sharing of information allowed the teachers to match the parent's talents and interests with the specific activities that needed to be performed. It was a means to ensure a successful experience.

Teachers were asked to listen to what parents had to say and allow them to participate in decision-making. The writer suggested that parents should be allowed to: choose or make materials when tutoring small groups or individuals, decide when the activity was mastered or should be changed, and select materials for the next lesson. The writer stressed to the teachers that the parent volunteers should be allowed to use their own judgement in performing the tasks entrusted to them. The purpose of this strategy was to form a positive teacher-parent partnership.

All parent volunteers were thanked for their services each month in the newsletter. Outstanding volunteers were mentioned by name and also had their names posted on large banners. These banners were posted in the hallways of both buildings. The writer wanted to communicate to all parent volunteers that they were both needed and appreciated.

To address the objective of the writer to decrease discipline referrals, the writer chose the following

strategies: encourage good study habits, encourage parents to work with the school, and make positive communications more often to students and parents.

This objective was accomplished as a result of the implementation of the aforementioned strategies. Students who saw parents as role models became more motivated to achieve. They received additional help and attention from teachers and parents. Those parents who could not volunteer at the school received frequent, positive communications from teachers and the principal as well as activities to do with their children each day of the month. Parents who did volunteer at the school, attended workshops and meetings, and joined school organizations became more involved in all facets of the education system and more self-confident in performing their activities. They were able to positively influence young students. Teachers, as a result, were able to spend more time teaching, identifying those children who were in special need, and providing them with additional time, materials, instruction, and attention. A student-parent-teacher relationship formed and grew stronger, more supportive, more understanding, and more cooperative.

To address the objective of the writer to increase the number of parents at monthly PTA meetings, the

writer chose the following strategies: provide opportunities for parents to participate in decision-making policies, encourage participation in the advisory council, make parents feel welcome, increase communications to inform parents of meetings.

Parents were encouraged to join the PTA and Local School Council. These two organizations are perfect means for parents to participate in decision-making policies concerning the school. Participation would heighten parent awareness and reinforce the fact that parents are an integral component of an organized, effective school. Parents were notified of PTA and Council meetings through the monthly newsletter. Reminders were sent two to three days before each meeting.

To address the final objective of the writer, for parents to meet twice monthly, the writer chose the following strategies: allow parents to choose topics of interest, keep meetings and workshops short, invite teachers and parents to be guest speakers, keep meetings positive, and offer encouragement and support.

Allowing parents to choose topics which are of interest to them guarantees that they will be more committed to attend the meetings. Fortunately, the parent volunteers were interested in learning so many

new things. Their interest and enthusiasm made it exceptionally easy for the writer to plan activities for the workshops.

The meetings were kept short and positive. The writer offered support and encouragement to all in attendance and assured the parents that she looked forward to the next meeting. The writer also reiterated that she was available to the parents whenever a need should arise.

In summary, the primary department of the writer's school recognized the need for parent involvement in the home and school. However, because parents lacked the necessary skills to assist their children, and often felt intimidated when visiting the school, they were hesitant about volunteering their services. Therefore, the writer proposed to increase home and school involvement of parents of primary grade students through communications, workshops, and in-service training.

Report of Action Taken

The solution used in this practicum involved the primary teachers, PTA president, principal, and parents. The primary teachers were concerned about the lack of parental involvement in school activities and the

education and social development of their children.

The solution strategy began with preliminary activities during the first weeks of implementation. Meetings were scheduled with the principal, PTA president, teachers, and parents.

The writer conferred with the principal during the first week of school. At this time the goals and specific objectives of this practicum were discussed. A date was set for the parent orientation meeting and letters of invitation were sent to each of the parents who had children in the primary grades and to those who had expressed interest during the spring of the previous year.

The writer next met with the PTA president. Strategies to increase parent attendance at the monthly meetings were discussed. These strategies included: evening meetings, combining PTA and Local School Council meetings, guest speakers, and holding meetings directly following assembly programs.

Another preliminary activity was to meet with the teachers. Although many expressed the need for parent involvement and the desire to have a volunteer in the classroom, the teachers were doubtful of the parents' capabilities. The results of the teacher survey proved that many negative feelings of the teachers toward the

parents would have to be brought out into the open, discussed, and resolved.

The initial meeting with the teachers was designated for this purpose. Teachers were given the opportunity to express and discuss all fears, reservations, and concerns. The writer stated at this time that not all parents were expected to volunteer time at the school. Those parents who were interested had to fulfill two requirements. They had to have a tuberculosis test and an interview with the principal. The few teachers who had experienced volunteers on a scheduled basis were most helpful in reassuring the other teachers. A list of the numerous activities that parent volunteers could perform or participate in was shared with the teachers. Above all, the writer stressed that the volunteers were to be welcomed and given the opportunity to participate in meaningful endeavors.

The fourth preliminary activity was meeting with the parents. The writer was pleased about the 27 parents who attended. The purpose of this meeting was to inform parents of their need to become active participants in the education of their children. To further illustrate this fact, the writer displayed recent articles from the city's two major newspapers which detailed how city children entering kindergarten compared with those

children who lived in the suburbs. The findings were devastating! The writer took this opportunity to explain the goals of the parent volunteer program.

The writer invited the parents to attend a meeting the following week. She explained that those parents who wished to volunteer on a regular basis would be given training, materials, and an extensive support system. Those parents who could not volunteer at school on a regular basis were invited to participate whenever their time allowed. All parents were reminded that they could become involved in school activities at home by: assisting their children with homework assignments, encouraging them to achieve, providing a place to study, offering praise and guidance, reading to or with their children, and doing the activities suggested in the monthly calendars.

One week prior to the parent meeting, notices were sent to all parents inviting them to the PTA and Local School Council meeting. These meetings were combined and scheduled for the same day and time as the volunteer meeting. The combination of meetings proved to be quite effective. A total of 27 parents were in attendance. The PTA president petitioned those present to become members of the PTA, thus kicking off the PTA Membership Drive. The writer was chosen as teacher representative

and was responsible for teacher membership. Thirty-five of the forty-three teachers became members. This represented 81% of the faculty.

The final preliminary activity was parent orientation for those parents who had accepted the invitation to become regular volunteers. The writer discussed school rules, classroom protocol, dress, volunteer requirements, and responsibilities.

Upon completion of the preliminary activities, the second phase of implementation was begun. This phase involved the regular, special, and home-based volunteers actually becoming involved in school and home activities. The second phase began during the seventh week of implementation with a parent workshop. Once again, the writer explained the goals of the volunteer program. These goals were to: 1. provide parents with the training and self-confidence to assist in their children's educational and social development at home and school; 2. provide children with role models; 3. assist parents in becoming partners with the educational system; 4. increase the interest and motivation of students, parents, and teachers; 5. establish positive home-school-community relations; 6. provide monthly activities for parents to use at home; 7. increase teacher awareness of the numerous ways to involve

parents in activities; 8. provide opportunities for parents to make decisions; 9. provide students with additional time and assistance; and 10. provide a warm, friendly, and supportive atmosphere for parents.

Parents were informed of the varied activities they could perform or participate in. A survey (see Appendix D) was distributed at this time. The writer asked the volunteers to check their hobbies, special interests, and talents. The survey was used to match volunteers with the particular needs of teachers and students. These surveys were shared with the teachers chosen by the volunteers.

The parents were next presented with a blank schedule divided into one-hour time blocks. They were asked to commit to a specific time, day, and place. This schedule would be copied for each parent and teacher. The writer discussed the importance of the schedule stating that teachers and students would be expecting them and relying upon them for assistance. Parents were given a copy of the Volunteer Sign-in/Activities Sheet and asked to complete one sheet per visit. A sample sheet is included in Appendix E.

Parents were asked to call if they were unable to come to school and, if possible, find a replacement. The writer suggested a volunteer directory listing the

telephone numbers of all the volunteers. Each volunteer would receive a copy of the directory. The first problem was encountered at this time. The parent volunteers decided against a directory. Security and privacy were the reasons which were cited. They did, however, assure the writer that replacements would be provided, if necessary, and that they would exchange telephone numbers among themselves.

The third purpose of the workshop was to share teaching and discipline strategies. The writer advised the volunteers to offer praise, vary activities, and be sensitive to the unique needs of the children. They were reminded of the writer's availability and support and were told to come directly to her if they encountered any problems.

The final purpose of the workshop was to introduce the volunteers to the classroom teachers and students whom they chose to assist. Teachers welcomed the parents, set aside space in the room for their use, and discussed ways in which the volunteers could aid the teachers and/or students. Teachers and parent volunteers appeared to be excited, but nervous.

October's PTA meeting was held the second Wednesday of the month. Thirteen parents attended. One of the items of business was the distribution of food

baskets to needy families. Four parents formed a committee, contacted businesses, grocery stores, and faculty members for donations of meat, vegetables, and canned goods. The parents worked on this project throughout October and into November.

The second item of business was a fundraiser. Members decided to have a taffy apple sale the last week of the month. Proceeds would finance the functions of the different committees.

One special event, Open House, occurred in October. The purpose of Open House is to familiarize parents with the teachers, school facility, and curriculum. The primary teachers met with the writer to discuss how attendance could be increased from the previous year. Instead of having three separate Open Houses on different days, the writer suggested having only one, combining the three grades. All teachers agreed to this arrangement and preparations were begun. Permission was granted by the principal, an announcement was printed in the monthly newsletter, and special invitations were sent to parents from classroom teachers and students. The primary teachers chose two speakers from each grade level, discussed the topics to be addressed, and planned for refreshments.

The day of Open House was a busy one. Teachers were

making preparations in their rooms, hanging signs of welcome in the halls, and preparing refreshments in the reception room. No one knew how many, or if any, parents would attend. Everyone was anxious but would not express their fears. Teachers had divided the afternoon into three half-hour time blocks: teachers would speak for the first half-hour, parents would visit individual rooms for the second half-hour, and partake in refreshments the third half-hour.

The afternoon finally arrived. A total of 77 parents were sitting in the parents' room! Speakers explained the curriculum, presented the curriculum overview chart, then discussed the city's discipline code, homework policy, and the responsibilities of students, parents, and teachers. These same materials would be sent home with every child, so that those parents who could not attend would have the same information. Parents were then invited to join the volunteer program even if they could not volunteer on a regular basis. They then moved upstairs to visit individual classes in progress. Parents ended the afternoon enjoying the refreshments. Open House was considered a success!

The writer held three meetings in November: two parent meetings and one teachers' meeting. There was

one PTA meeting. The special events of the month included report card pick-up, distribution of award ribbons, the beginning of the after-school, social center program, and distribution of food baskets.

The first parent meeting in November was a training session. The parents had expressed interest in learning to operate the different equipment. The meeting was held in the writer's room and sixteen parents attended. The writer has a Chapter 1 program and six different machines, including a duplicator and a thermofax copier. It was therefore more convenient to meet in her room. The writer labled each machine, explained its purpose, and demonstrated how to operate them. Each parent had an opportunity to operate the machines.

A problem occurred in the interim of the two parent meetings concerning the display "Volunteer of the Week". Parents did not like this idea. They believed that all were doing their best and volunteered as much time as they could afford. It was decided at this time to change the display. The names and pictures of all the volunteers were displayed in the hallway with the caption "Volunteers of the Month."

Another problem arose at the second parent meeting which was a discussion session. Parents shared information and ideas. All seemed happy and

enthusiastic with the exception of one. This parent had initiated confrontations with two different teachers in front of their students. The writer, after reviewing the Volunteer Sign-in/Activities Sheets, noted that there were none on file for this parent. The writer spoke privately with the parent after the meeting. She explained that parents and teachers were role models for the students and discussed the proper channels of authority if there were a problem. The writer reiterated the purpose of the volunteer program and offered to schedule her to assist in either office. She stressed that the program could not be used as a guise to enter classrooms and interfere with daily operations. The writer suggested that the parent should talk to the principal. This suggestion was not taken.

The writer told the principal of the problem, repeated the conversation, and asked for assistance in solving the problem. The principal was aware of the situation and said that it would resolve itself. Fortunately, the parent returned to work and is not available during school hours.

The incident between the parent and two teachers was not mentioned at the teachers' meeting. The writer did, however, remind them to report any misunderstandings or personality conflicts. If necessary, the writer would

schedule another volunteer to assist in their rooms. This precaution was not necessary. Teachers expressed that the program was working better than they had anticipated. They reported that the volunteers were following the schedule, many were staying longer, and most were coming more often during the week. Surprisingly, teachers were happy about this situation and encouraged the parents to come as often as possible. Parent-teacher relationships had formed!

November's PTA meeting was held the same day as report card pick-up. Nineteen parents attended this meeting. The president discussed the success of the taffy apple fundraiser and detailed how the proceeds would be spent. It was also voted to combine PTA and Council meetings, since members were the same for both organizations.

The first special event held this month was report card pick-up. Parents must visit the school a minimum of twice a year. These days, designated at the end of the first and third marking periods, are mandated by the city's board of education. Report cards are held until parents come, but must be issued at the end of the following marking period. Eighty-three percent of the parents of primary grade students came to school to get their children's card and confer with the teachers.

This attendance rate represented an increase of seven percent over the spring of the previous year.

The second event was the presentation of award ribbons. The principal asked all teachers to submit the names of students who qualified in each of four categories: all A's, A's and B's, perfect attendance, and good citizenship. The names appeared in the monthly newsletter. The principal also purchased school ribbons for each category. These ribbons were presented to the students by the principal. Many students had more than one ribbon. All wore them proudly.

The third event was the beginning of after-school social center. This was a special program because not only were teachers employed, but so were 13 parents. This program gave the parents an excellent opportunity to display their tremendous talents.

The final event of the month was the distribution of the Thanksgiving food baskets. As mentioned previously, four parents were on this committee. However, as Thanksgiving approached, numerous parents volunteered to make pick-ups, pack the baskets, and make deliveries. A total of 18 baskets were given away. The parents felt a sense of accomplishment and learned that they could work well as a team. The committee immediately began planning for the Christmas baskets.

The writer held two parent meetings in December and one teacher's meeting. The PTA and Council met on several occasions. December's special events included the parent volunteer Christmas party and the distribution of the Christmas food baskets.

The parent meeting was held the first week in December and was a make-and-take workshop. The volunteers were provided with all the necessary materials to make reading games and flash cards. Different skills were suggested including: the alphabet, dolch words, contractions, and words containing blends, digraphs, diphthongs, and long and short vowels. An example game of word recognition using the dolch words and containing brief and simple directions was exhibited for parents to refer to. Lists of words were provided for each skill. The parents could make as many games and flashcards as they desired to use at school or take home.

The second parent meeting, a discussion session, was extremely brief. Parents indicated that there were no problems. They expressed the enjoyment of the students over the different reading games. Their interest was maintained and they had fun while learning.

The teacher's meeting was quite interesting. The teachers commented on how well the volunteers were doing

and how they had developed over the past few months. They were more self-assured and willing to accept new experiences. They served wherever they were needed. The teachers were most appreciative and planned a Christmas party to express their feelings. They also bought gifts for their volunteers.

The PTA and Local School Council called approximately four meetings in December. The first three were called to audit the books. A problem had arisen. The proceeds from the fundraiser had never been deposited in the bank. Receipts from the sales company discredited the information given by the PTA president regarding the exact number of cases purchased. The president did not come to the first two meetings. At the third meeting, members asked that the money be deposited in the bank within a week. To further complicate matters, the president had a serious confrontation with the Council president and school community representative, threatening both. The Council president submitted her official letter of resignation. The members asked for the same from the PTA president at the fourth meeting.

Whether this situation was intentional or due to inexperience, the effects were detrimental to the PTA. The president was asked to resign, the 1st

vice-president had accepted full-time employment, and the 2nd vice-presedent did not want the position. Neither did any of the other members. The PTA was dissolving. Members felt betrayed. Those who had not joined stated that they never would. Many exhaustive efforts would have to be attempted to remedy this problem.

The Christmas party for the volunteers was extravagant. The parents had already decorated their room for the holidays. The writer decorated the tables with red cloths and festive placemats and centerpieces. Each teacher in the primary grades, and many in the upper grades, brought a wide assortment of foods and desserts. The principal and the writer expressed their appreciation of the volunteers. The writer then presented each with a gift. The parents talked about the party for days and, in return, bought donuts for all the teachers a week later.

The second special event was the distribution of the Christmas food baskets. Despite what had occurred with the PTA, the members were committed to making this project as successful as the first. They accomplished their task. Once again, the committee made the necessary contacts, other members eagerly assisted, and another 18 baskets were given to needy families.

The month of January was basically uneventful. The writer met twice with the parent volunteers and once with the parents. There were no PTA meeting or special events.

The meeting with the parent volunteers was another make-and-take workshop. The purpose was to make math games and flashcards. The writer followed the same procedure as with the reading games. Suggestions for skills included: number recognition, simple addition and/or subtraction, multiplication and/or division, time, and money. The volunteers enjoyed the activities.

The second meeting was a discusssion session. Parents had experienced no problems. They shared information on the use of the math games. From all indications, this too was a rewarding and beneficial experience for both volunteers and students.

The meeting with the teachers produced the same results as the others. They were pleased with the volunteers and had experienced no problems of any kind. The writer, at this point, decided that this would be the last formal meeting. The teachers were reassured that they were not being abandoned and that the writer was available to them.

February was the last month of implementation for

the purposes of this practicum. The writer will, however, continue her work with the volunteers. Two meetings were held with the volunteers. There was no PTA meeting for the second consecutive month. The writer experienced something that was very special to her.

A guest speaker was invited to the first meeting in February. The speaker, the school community representative, spoke to the volunteers about state reform. This is a critical issue in this city at this time. In a few short months, the state will take control of the city's board of education. The bill has been signed and will be effected July 1, 1989. The volunteers were informed of all the changes that will occur, particularly the ones that will involve them. This meeting was most enlightening. Many questions were raised, and the volunteers invited the speaker to return in April, after the various unions, lawyers, and task forces convene.

The volunteers completed the Parent Questionnaire during the second meeting. Upon completions, they appeared worried. When the writer asked if they had experienced any problems, they voiced their concerns. They were worried that the meetings and activities would cease. The writer assured them that all meetings and

activities would continue. She explained that every program must be evaluated to determine its strengths and weaknesses. This was the purpose of the Parent Questionnaire.

One of the volunteers had not completed the questionnaire and said that she would speak to the writer later. When the writer returned to her room, the volunteer approached her. She informed the writer that she could not read and could barely write her name. Other parents had completed the sign-in/activities sheets for her. She then asked if the writer would mind her sitting in her room during the morning activities of reading, skill development, and phonics. The writer embraced the volunteer and told her to come the very next morning. The volunteer had enough trust in the writer to share her innermost secret and ask for help. This trust, by far, was the most extraordinary gift anyone could have given to the writer.

The final phase of implementation was evaluation. The first activity, the Parent Questionnaire, assessed the number of special volunteers and the number of parents who helped their children at home. The questionnaire and results are presented in Appendix F. The volunteer form and the Volunteer Sign-in/Activities Sheet assessed the number of parents who volunteered on

a regular basis. The discipline referrals, submitted by the teachers, measured the effects of parent participation on student behavior. The results were compared to last year's total. An attendance record measured parent participation at PTA meetings, training sessions, and discussion sessions.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

Objective One was measured by a teacher-made questionnaire. This questionnaire and the results may be found in Appendix F. The objective, "Over a period of 24 weeks, the number of special volunteers, those who volunteer their services upon request, will increase from 9 to 20 as measured by a teacher-made questionnaire to be given at the end of implementation" was met with an actual increase of 61 parents. These parents volunteered time in their children's classrooms, the school, attended PTA and Council meetings, assembly programs, conferences, and participated in class parties. The original increase of only 11 parents was chosen because of the writer's years of experience of not having parents involved in any way with the school, other than to send their children. As explained previously, many positive efforts on the part of teachers and administrators had to be made to reach out to the parents. Although there are many parents who have not yet been motivated, this practicum has proven that parents who are made to feel welcome, will participate in school functions.

One positive result of the parent volunteer program was that once the parents made the initial visit, they usually returned. Another positive result was that more fathers participated in the different activities. Fathers came to school for conferences, meetings, and class parties. They also accompanied their children on field trips. Many of the questionnaires were completed by fathers. This is especially notable because there are no males in the primary department. However, fathers at the school provided the young male students with a male role model.

Objective Two was measured by questions five through seven of the same teacher-made questionnaire. The specific objective was, "Over a period of 24 weeks, approximately 150 (50%) of the parents of children in grades 1 through 3 will have tried 25 learning activities at home as measured by a teacher-made questionnaire to be given at the end of implementation."

Three hundred questionnaires were sent home and 217 were returned. This represented a return rate of 72%. Of those responding parents, 191 or 64% of all the parents of primary grade students, had used at least 25 of the activities suggested in the monthly calendars. This result suggests that parents are interested in the

education of their children and will help them when provided with materials and suggestions which are stated clearly and are interesting.

Quite a few of the parents wrote comments on the questionnaire. Many parents stated that they were not active at the school because of small children, illness, full-time employment, or school. They did, however, do the activities provided in the calendars. Other parents (10) stated that they had never seen the calendars, but would be looking for it in the future. Only 16 of the 217 responding parents said that they did not use the calendars. Two stated that they were a waste of time.

A positive result of the development of the monthly activities calendars was their distribution throughout the district. A copy of each calendar was submitted to the District Superintendent. She, in return, sent copies to each of the 20 principals in the district and encouraged their use. This widespread distribution made it possible for every parent in the district to have the same information and strategies to assist their children at home.

Objective Three measured the number of parents who fulfilled the city's board of education requirements regarding volunteer workers. It also measured the number of volunteers who committed to a regular

schedule.

Two instruments were used for evaluation. The first instrument was the official volunteer form issued by the city's board of education and kept on file in each school once the requirements have been met. The second instrument was the teacher-made Volunteer Sign-in/Activities Sheet. A sample sheet is provided in Appendix E.

The specific objective, "Over a period of 24 weeks, a minimum of 15 parents will have fulfilled the city's board of education requirements for parent volunteers as measured by the official forms provided by the board of education and kept on file in the office of each school" was met by a total of 33 parents fulfilling the requirements. This number more than doubled the 15 parents originally chosen for this practicum.

The second part of the objective "Over a period of 24 weeks, these 15 parents will commit to a schedule, volunteering one hour per week for 15 of the 20 weeks of actual implementation as measured by a teacher-made Volunteer Sign-in/Activities Sheet to be completed by the volunteers and kept by the writer throughout the implementation period" was met each week. Parents volunteered their services for a minimum of one hour per week. Eight parents volunteered their services

everyday. Table 2 depicts the number of volunteers who committed to the schedule for the entire month.

Table 2

Parents Who Committed To A Schedule				
October	November	December	January	February
25	18	25	23	20

The fourth objective, "Over a period of 24 weeks, discipline referrals, submitted by teachers, will decrease by ten percent from the previous year as measured by the number of referrals kept on file in the assistant principal's office at the end of the implementation period" was measured by the actual number of referrals on file. Referrals submitted the previous year, October through June, totaled 150. This total represented an average of 16.6 referrals per each of the nine school months. Referrals submitted this school year, September through February, totaled 68. This represented an average of 6.8 referrals per each of the six school months involved in this practicum; a 41% decrease from the previous year.

The positive results of this notable decrease are obvious. Teachers had more time to teach and students engaged in more learning. There were few complaints from teachers and their attendance rate was higher.

Objective Five, "Over a period of 24 weeks, the number of parents in attendance at monthly PTA meetings will increase to 30 parents per meeting as measured by an attendance record to be maintained by the PTA president at each PTA meeting" was not met by reasons explained in Chapter IV. Table 3 depicts the number in attendance at each of the four monthly PTA meetings.

Table 3

Parents' Attendance At Monthly PTA Meetings

September	October	November	December
27	13	19	10

The final objective, Objective Six, measured parents' attendance at each of the monthly discussion and training sessions. The objective was written in two parts and both were measured by an attendance record maintained by the writer. The specific objectives were, "Over a period of 24 weeks, 15 parent volunteers will attend four of the five monthly discussion sessions as measured by and attendance record bo be maintained by the the writer throughout the implementation period," and "Over a period of 24 weeks, 15 parent volunteers will attend four of the five monthly training sessions as measured by an attendance record to be maintained by the writer throughout the implementation period." Both

objectives were met as shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Volunteer's Attendance At Monthly Sessions

Discussion Sessions

October	November	December	January	February
20	16	18	18	15

Training Sessions

October	November	December	January	February
20	20	27	15	18

Conclusions

The first objective concerned special volunteers, those who volunteer their services upon request. This objective, as evidenced in the previous section, was met well within the established guidelines. Strategies used to increase the number of special volunteers included meetings with teachers, consistent and positive communications from school to home, lists of activities for parent volunteers provided for the teachers, teacher assistance in selecting activities for volunteers, and oral and written invitations to parents to participate in a given activity.

The first strategy required the writer to present strategies to the teachers to encourage parents to participate in school activities. The writer stressed

the importance of making parents feel welcome and needed. She indicated that parents should be asked to participate through oral and written invitations and should always receive written notes of appreciation, as suggested by Novatis (1986).

The results of this strategy support the findings of Cherry (1980), Gonzales (1980), Haley (1985), and Walters and Gunderson (1985). Cherry found that parents offered support through encouragement, time, energy, and creativity. Gonzales and Haley recognized that parents were very positive and excited when invited to participate in activities and that many had become regular volunteers because of their successful and gratifying experiences. Walters and Gunderson noted that parents provided positive role models for their own and other children.

The second strategy to increase special volunteers was the use of consistent and positive communications from school to home. The writer suggested that teachers call the students' homes regularly, assign and grade homework that was interesting and varied, write notes of encouragement on students' assignments, and give awards, stickers, and praise.

The principal sent monthly newsletters to each home which informed all parents of those students who had

perfect attendance, good citizenship, or were on the honor roll. The newsletters also gave the dates and times of special events. Each month, parents were invited to different activities and those who participated were given special recognition and a note of appreciation.

Novatis (1986) and Pawlas (1985) both discovered long range benefits of effective communication between the school and home. They both found that effective communications created a warm spirit of cooperation and made parents aware that the principal, the educational leader of the school, was interested in and aware of what occurred in the classrooms.

The third strategy required the writer to present activities to the teachers that parents could perform alone or assist in. These suggestions were offered by Johnson et al. (1977), Lapides and Lapides (1981), Long (1982), and Maurer (1985). The results of this strategy support their findings. The number of parents participationg in school activities increased.

The second objective of this practicum addressed parents' participation in learning activities at home with their children. This objuctive was met as evidenced in the data presented in the previous section. The writer employed numerous strategies to accomplish

this objective.

The first strategy was the development of the monthly activities calendars as suggested by Amundson (1982), Bristor (1987), and Rich (1985). These calendars alerted the parents to specific reading skills, offered suggestions to help students in the mastery of these skills, and suggested fun things to do and interesting places to go.

The second strategy was the assigning of carefully selected homework that was clearly stated and varied. Foyle (1986) believed that homework increased student achievement when it was regularly assigned, clearly stated, regularly collected, promptly graded and returned. London (1984) asserted that the home was enhanced as parents gained confidence in helping their children with homework and other assignments.

The third strategy was to provide all of the parents of children in the primary grades with a curriculum overview chart and tips for good study habits as recommended by Amundson (1982). The curriculum overview chart details each skill that is presented in each grade level. The skills are categorized into the following subject areas: reading, language arts, math, social studies, science, health and safety, art, music, library science, and physical education. The writer believed

that parents should be aware of the skills their children would be exposed to for that year.

The writer agreed with Bristor (1987), Comer (1986), Epstein (1986), Gordon et al. (1978), Podsen (1984), Seeley (1986), and Yawkey and Silvern (1976). Bristor belived that the most important result of schools and parents working together is that it demonstrated that teachers did not regard themselves as the sole experts in the field of learning. It also proved that learning does not take place only in the school. Comer stated that students were more responsive to the academic and behavioral expectations of the school staff when there was a good parent-teacher relationship. Epstein noted that frequent use of parent involvement resulted in a large collection of ideas for parents to use at home and increased parent understanding of the school program. Gordon found that parents, as teachers of their own children, affected other children in the family. Podsen discovered that when a child meets the standards of parents, he/she usually surpasses school expectations. Seeley avowed that parents care about their children and are willing to help them to succeed if they know what to do and how to do it. Yawkey and Silvern said that the effect of shared information helps develop feelings that parents are vital in their child's learning.

The third objective addressed parent volunteers fulfilling the city's requirements and committing to a schedule. This objective was met well within the established guidelines. Strategies to accomplish this objective included: parent workshops, parent discussion sessions, matching of parents abilities and desires with teachers' needs, and providing opportunities for parents to participate in decision-making.

The first strategy involved the parent volunteers in make-and-take workshops as suggested by Beluschak (1985), Halasa (1983), Heimberger (1978), Janoff and Meiers (1977), Johnson et al. (1977), and Plumb and Burrow (1986). The writer presented workshops and provided all the materials so that parents would have materials and specific strategies to use with small groups and individual students. The writer found that parents were enthusiastic about the workshops and successful in using them with the students. These findings support those of Heimberger, who stated that parents came to school more often when they felt successful.

The second strategy was the involvement of parent volunteers in monthly discussion sessions. Yawkey and Silvern (1976) believed that parents must be provided with opportunities to grow and learn. This was the

purpose of the discussion sessions. Volunteers were provided with the opportunity ot exchange information, explain activities that were or were not successful, and ask questions. The meetings were relaxed and the results were positive. The writer is in agreement with the findings of Maurer (1985). Parents appreciated the opportunities for informal talks.

The third strategy was to match the interests and talents of the volunteers to the particular needs of the teachers. The writer asked each volunteer to complete a checklist of their interests, hobbies, and talents. The checklist was then shared with the individual teachers. The purpose was to involve parents in the activities that were of interest to them and to fully utilize the unique talents of each volunteer. The writer believed that if the parents were involved in activities of interest, they would experience success, and would find it easier to fulfill their commitment.

The fourth strategy was to include parents in decision-making. Comer (1986), Epstein (1986), and Lapides and Lapides (1981) stated that teachers should allow parents to choose activities. The writer suggested to the teachers that parents must be partners in the education of their children. She encouraged teachers to listen to what parents had to say and accept

those ideas which were feasible.

The positive results of these strategies confirm the findings of Benson (1972) and Ford (1979). Benson found that parental interest and involvement increased and that volunteers rarely missed. When it was necessary to miss, they sent substitutes or called to explain. Ford discovered that parents gained confidence in their own roles as educators.

Objective four assessed students' social development. This objective was measured by the number of discipline referrals submitted by teachers and was met within the established guidelines. Reasons for the decrease in referrals were explained by Comer (1985), Hankerson (1982), Lapides and Lapides (1981), and True and Ehda (1980).

Comer recognized that parents gained knowledge that enhanced them to better support the academic, social, and psychological growth of students. Hankerson alleged that parents assisted in easing children's disruptions and frustrations at school, aided children in developing good feelings about themselves and others, and strengthened pupil-teacher relationships. Lapides and Lapides asserted that volunteers comforted students when teachers were busy, gave students opportunities to become familiar with friendly adults, and received new

ways of handling children. True and Ehda declared that parent volunteers permitted teachers to give more individual help to students.

The fifth objective measured parents' attendance at monthly PTA meetings. This objective was not met for reasons given in Chapter IV. The writer was of the opinion that participation would heighten parent awareness. They would conceive of themselves as integral members of the school. Parents were constantly encouraged and invited to participate in meetings. Notification of the date, place, and time were always printed in the montly newsletters and sent to each home the first of every month. Unfortunately, the strategies employed by the writer and the principal failed.

The final objective measured parents' participation at monthly discussion and training sessions and was met, as evidenced by data presented in the previous section. The writer allowed parents to choose topics which were of interest to them, kept the meetings short and positive, invited teachers and parents to be guest speakers, and offered encouragement and support.

In conclusion, this practicum project proved that parents who are made to feel welcome, needed, and invited will participate in the educational and social development of their children in the school and at home.

It also proved that students benefit academically, socially, and psychologically from an effective parent volunteer program. The writer is pleased with the overall results obtained in the practicum and intends to expand the program to the intermediate and upper grades throughout the coming years. The writer will investigate strategies that will improve the selection processes of officers to organizations which are vital to the school and strategies that will boost parent attendance at these organizations.

Recommendations

The writer has eight specific recommendations based on the results of this practicum. First, teachers and administrators must reach out to parents. They must invite parents to school functions, make them feel welcome, thank them for their participation , and invite them to return. Second, teachers and administrators must communicate frequently with parents. Communications should be positive and informative. Third, the parent volunteer coordinator must schedule training sessions for teachers and parents. Teachers must be made aware of how parents can be involved in classroom activities and must be assured of the benefits of the volunteer program. Parents need to become

familiar with school rules and classroom protocol. They must be given teaching and discipline strategies and materials to use. Fourth, teachers must provide teaching strategies to those parents who can not visit the school so they, too, can be involved in the education of their children. Fifth, meetings must be scheduled at a time that is convenient for the majority of the parents. Sixth, parents must be allowed to make decisions. Teachers must listen to parents and follow their advice when the decisions are feasible. Seventh, parents must be encouraged to join the PTA and School Council. Eighth, parents and teachers must make every effort to make these organizations successful.

Dissemination

The results of this practicum will be shared in the following ways. First, the practicum will be submitted to the school's principal and assistant principals. Second, the practicum will be submitted to the board of education's departments of Research and Evaluation and Volunteer Programs. Third, the writer is planning to write a journal article stressing the benefits and successes of a parent volunteer program.

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RESULTS OF TEACHER SURVEY

Name Room #

1. Within the past school year, how many different parents have volunteer to assist in your room or on a field trip?

# of Teachers	# of Different Parents	Total
1	0	0
4	1	4
5	3	15
2	4	8
1	6	6
1	10	10
Total: 14		43

2. What activities did the parents perform in the room?

Responses	Number of Teachers Giving Responses
Only field trips	7
Making/putting up bulleting boards	5
Helping with parties	4
Assisting with duties	4
Watching the class	3
Organizing activity centers	3
Filing or grading papers	3

3. How often did the parents come? *

Responses	Number of Teachers Giving Responses
Only for field trips	7
Everyday	1
Never	1
Not often	1

A few times	1
When needed	1
Frequently	1

* One teacher did not answer this question.

4. On an average, what was the length of each visit?

Responses	Number of Teachers Giving Responses
20 minutes	1
30-60 minutes	1
60 minutes	3
Length of field trip	8

5. Did you encounter any problems with the volunteers? Be specific.

Responses	Number of Teachers Giving Responses
Does not apply	1
No	12
Yes, parents did not want to do what was asked. Parents wanted to visit other volunteers.	1

6. Are you or would you be comfortable with a parent volunteer in your room? If not, please state the reason?

Responses	Number of Teachers Giving Responses
Yes	10
Yes, but with reservation	3

No. Parents do not understand classroom activities and procedures.	1

7. What, do you feel, are the reasons why parents do not volunteer in the school? Be specific.

Responses	Number of Teachers Giving Responses
Not interested	6
Employment	5
Lack of education	5
Laziness	4
Young children at home	3
Poor teacher/parent relations	2
Unable to commit to a schedule	1
Poor communications	1
Not a priority	1

8. On a scale of one to four, please circle the number that most closely represents your attitude toward parents volunteering in the school.

1	2	3	4
not important	important	very important	crucial

Responses	Number of Teachers Giving Responses
Important	3
Very important	8
Crucial	1

9. List, in order the activities you would like the volunteers to perform in your room.

Number of Teachers

Responses	Giving Responses
Tutoring	10
Assisting with duties	8
Decorating boards/centers	7
Correcting papers/workbooks	5
Filing	4
Reading to students	3
Accompanying on field trips	3
Watching the classroom	2
Maintaining records	2
Assisting with parties	2
Contacting parents	1
Observing work habits of students	1
Photocopying materials	1

10. List three ways in which you, the students, the parents, and/or the school could benefit from a volunteer program?

Responses	Number of Teachers Giving Responses
Teachers could provide additional time to students	8
Parents would become role models for their children	4
School-community relationship would improve	3
Students would become aware of the parent-teacher partnership	3
Behaviour problems would decrease	3

Parents would learn new ways of teaching their children	2
Parents would understand the learning process	2
Parents would recruit other parents	2

APPENDIX B

PARENT SURVEY

Dear Parent,

If you are interested in becoming a Parent Volunteer or a Room Parent, please sign below.

*** WE NEED YOU! ***

NAME	TELEPHONE #	CHILD'S NAME
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

APPENDIX C

MONTHLY ACTIVITIES CALENDARS

VAN VLISSINGEN SCHOOL
137 W. 108th Place
Chicago, Illinois 60628

Developed by: Melissa A. Russell
Approved by: [illegible]

Grade 1 MONTHLY ACTIVITIES CALENDAR
DECEMBER, 1988

Reading objectives 5. Follows written directions
5. Recognizes cause and effect relationships

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
DECEMBER VOCABULARY Santa Claus, St. Nick, jolly, reindeer, sleigh, lights, Christmas, presents Rudolph, red-nosed, naughty, nice, decorations, ornaments, chimney, elves, candy canes, sharing, giving, family, friends, excitement, poinsettia, wrapping, holly, mistletoe, bells, star, bows ribbons, carols, wreath				1 Directions 1. Draw a circle 2. Color it blue 3. Put an X under the circle	2 Directions 1. Draw a rectangle 2. Put a red ✓ in the rectangle	3 Santa come to Beverly Branch Library 2121 W. 95t 10:00 AM Get a book!
4 Make your Christmas list!	5 *Book Fair* Directions 1. Draw a dog 2. Put a long tail on the dog 3. Color it brown and black	6 *Book Fair* Directions 1. Draw a house 2. Draw a tree next to the house 3. Put a sun over over the house	7 *Book Fair* Directions 1. Draw a green balloon 2. Make a long string on the balloon 3. Put a bow on it	8 *Book Fair* Directions 1. Write the numbers 1 2 3 2. Circle 1 3. Put an X on 2 4. Put a ✓ under 3	9 *Book Fair* Directions 1. Draw 4 short lines ---- 2. Put G on line 1 3. Put O on 2 and 3 4. Put D on line 4	10 Choose a special gift. 2 sentences persuading your parents to buy for you.
11 Proofread your sentences. Draw a picture of the gift. Bring your story to school.	12 Cause and Effect Read "Little Miss Muffett" Ask: Why did Miss Muffett run away?	13 Cause and Effect Read "Old Mother Hubbard" Ask: Why did Mother Hubbard go to the cupboard?	14 Cause and Effect Read "Humpty Dumpty" Ask: Why couldn't they put Humpty together again?	15 Cause and Effect Finish the sentence I am happy because _____.	16 Cause and Effect Finish the sentence I am sad because _____.	17 Museum of Science & Indus "Christmas Arou the World"
18 Time to buy the Christmas tree! Sing Christmas carols	19 Cause and Effect Finish the sentence I had to wear a coat because ____ _____.	20 Cause and Effect Finish the sentence The baby cried because _____ _____.	21 Cause and Effect Finish the sentence I had a party because _____ _____.	22 *CHRISTMAS ASSEMBLY* Grade 1 Performers	23 *PUPPET SHOW*	24 Santa's comi Read 'Twas the Night Before Christmas Go to bed earl
25 CHRISTMAS DAY MERRY CHRISTMAS!	26 Over the holidays, please read with your child. Help your child write a story about Christmas activities	27	28 Happy Holidays	29	30	31 New Year's E Make your new y resolutions: 1. read more 2. study longe

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VAN VLISSINGEN SCHOOL
137 W. 108th Place
Chicago, Illinois 60628

Developed by: Rachael A. Russell
Approved by: [illegible]

Grade 2 DECEMBER ACTIVITIES CALENDAR
December, 1988

Reading Objective 5. Identifies vowel digraphs, diphthongs, and r-controlled vowels

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
DECEMBER VOCABULARY Santa Claus, St. Nick, jolly, reindeer, sleigh, lights, Christmas, presents, Rudolph, red-nosed, naughty, nice, decorations, ornaments, chimney, elves, candy canes, sharing, giving, family, friends, excitement, poinsettia, wrapping, holly, mistletoe, bells, star, bows, ribbons, lights, carols				1 R-controlled vowels Say these words: star cork hammer farm for her bird curtain shirt purse	2 R-controlled vowels Say these words: park horn were car store order first turn girl church	3 Santa comes to Beverly Branch Library 2121 W. 95th 10:00 AM Get a book!
4 Make your Christmas list!	5 *Book Fair* Digraph oo Say these words: moon tool pool boot Circle the digraph	6 *Book Fair* Digraph oo Say these words: hook foot wood book Circle the digraph	7 *Book Fair* Digraph ea Say these words: bread head thread sweater Circle the digraph	8 *Book Fair* Digraph au Say these words: auto because haul fault Circle the digraph	9 *Book Fair* Digraph aw Say these words: lawn claws crawl straw Circle the digraph	10 Choose a special gift. Write 3 or more sentences persuading your parents to buy it for you.
11 Proofread your sentences. Draw a picture of the gift Bring your story to school.	12 Digraph al Say these words: also ball false walk Circle the digraph	13 *Gompers School* Digraph ow (ō) Say these words: know blow slow straw Circle the digraph	14 Digraph ou(or) Say these words: four pour fourth Circle the digraph	15 Digraph ou (ū) Say these words: trouble cousin country touch Circle the digraph	16 Write the seven vowel digraphs and review the sounds. — — — — — — —	17 Museum of Science & Industry "Christmas Around the World"
18 Time to buy the Christmas tree! Sing Christmas carols	19 Diphthong oy Say these words: boy toy Roy Joy voyage Circle the dipthong Write 2 sentences	20 Diphthong oi Say these words: oil soil coil coin point spoil choice noise Circle the diphthong Write 4 sentences	21 Diphthong ow Say these words: powder cow down flower now crown towel owl clown Circle the diphthong Write 4 sentences	22 Diphthong ou Say these words: blouse mouth mouth house mouse around cloud scout Circle the diphthong Write 4 sentences	23 Diphthong ew Say these words: flew new grew blew drew stew jewel Circle the dipthong Write 3 sentences	24 Santa's coming! Read 'Twas the Night Before Christmas Go to bed early.
25 CHRISTMAS DAY MERRY CHRISTMAS!	26 Over the holidays, please read with your child. Help your child write a story about Christmas activities	27 Happy	28 Holidays	29	30	31 New Year's Eve Make your new year resolutions: 1. read more 2. Study longer

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VAN VLISSINGEN SCHOOL
137 W. 108th Place
Chicago, Illinois 60628

Developed by: Millicent D Russell
Approved by: [illegible]

Grade 3 MONTHLY ACTIVITIES CALENDAR
DECEMBER, 1988

Reading Objective 5. Recognizes figurative language: simile, personification, onomatopoeia

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	DECEMBER	VOCABULARY		1 Read the personification. Circle the meaning. Time ran out. 1. There was not enough time. 2. Clock ran away	2 Read the personification. Circle the meaning. The sun peeped out. 1. Sun played hide-and-seek. 2. Sun began to shine.	3 Santa comes to Beverly Branch Library 2121 W. 95th 10:00 AM Get a book!
Santa Claus, St. Nick, jolly, reindeer, sleigh, lights, Rudolph, red-nosed, naughty, nice, decorations, ornaments, Christmas, presents candy canes, sharing, giving, family, friends, excitement, chimney, elves, wrapping, holly, mistletoe, bells, star, bows, ribbons, lights, carols						
4 Make your Christmas list!	5 *Book Fair* Circle the meaning of the personification. The kettle whistled. 1. It sang a song. 2. The water boiled	6 *Book Fair* Circle the meaning of the personification. My pillow called me. 1. I want to rest. 2. My pillow talks.	7 *Book Fair* Circle the meaning of the personification. His hair stood on end. 1. It walked. 2. It was messy.	8 *Book Fair* Circle the meaning of the personification. The wind howled. 1. It was strong 2. It yelled.	9 *Book Fair* Circle the meaning of the personification. The cake was inviting. 1. It had a party. 2. It looked good.	10 Choose a special gift. Write a paragraph of at least 5 sentences persuading your parents to buy it for you.
11 Proofread your paragraph. Draw a picture of the gift Bring your story to school.	12 Circle the onomatopoeia. Buzz! Buzz! Buzz! The busy bees hovered around the hive.	13 *Compers School* Circle the onomatopoeia. Sam posed on the diving board. Splash! He dove in the pool.	14 Circle the onomatopoeia. Rain began to fall. Ping! Ping! It gently hit the windows.	15 Circle the onomatopoeia. Boom! Boom! The marchers beat the drums.	16 Circle the onomatopoeia. Martin was excited about going to Great America. He ran out the door. Bam!	17 Museum of Science & Industry "Christmas Around the World"
18 Time to buy the Christmas tree! Sing Christmas carols.	19 Circle the simile. John yells loudly. He: 1. roars like a lion 2. is as quiet as a mouse	20 Circle the simile. They are nice, polite, friendly children. They are: 1. quiet as mice 2. sweet as sugar	21 Circle the simile. Tony is the fastest runner. He is: 1. light as a cloud 2. quick as lightning	22 Circle the simile. There wasn't a sound in the library. Everyone was: 1. happy as a lark 2. quiet as mice	23 Circle the simile. The snow glistened in the moonlight. The snow: 1. sparkled like diamonds 2. was heavy as lead	24 Santa's coming Read 'Twas the Night Before Christmas Go to bed early.
25 Christmas Day Merry Christmas!	26 Over the holidays, please read with your child. Help your child write a story about Christmas activities	27 Happy	28 Hanukkah	29	30	31 New Year's Eve Make your new year resolutions: 1. read more 2. study longer

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APPENDIX D

SURVEY OF INTERESTS

Dear Parents,

Below are a few services that are needed to allow the teachers to spend additional instructional time with the students. Please check the services in which you are most interested.

Parent's Name:

Child's Name: Room:

SERVICES

Instructional
__Reading to children
__Listening to children read to you
__Small group tutoring
__Individual tutoring
__Assist on field trips

Clerical
__Typing
__Correcting papers/ workbooks
__Filing papers
__Photocopying materials
__Cutting letters
__Tracing patterns

Duties
__Lining students up for A.M. entrance
__Lunchroom
__Office

Hobbies
__Storytelling
__Photography
__Other:

Talents and Interests
__Singing
__Playing the piano
__Sewing
__Making games
__Art
__Making bulletin boards

APPENDIX E

VOLUNTEER SIGN-IN/ACTIVITIES SHEET

Name:

Teacher's name: Room #

Date: (Please circle day) M T W T F

Time in: Time out:

Activities:

Is this your scheduled time and workplace

Is this additional time?

APPENDIX F

RESULTS OF PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Parents,

Please take a few minutes of your time to answer the following questions concerning the Parent Volunteer Program. Thankyou for your continued cooperation.

Sincerely,

Milicent D. Russell
Parent Volunteer Coordinator

1. Were your a scheduled volunteer who had completed the requirements of the Board of Education?

Responses	
Yes	33
No	184

2. During the past school year, 1988-1989, did you volunteer any time in your child's classroom?

Responses	
Yes	70
No	114

3. How many times did you volunteer at the school?

	Responses						
Times	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Number of Parents	114	28	16	12	11	2	1

4. How many times did you visit the school for each of the following activities:

PTA meetings?

	Responses				
Times	0	1	2	3	4
Number of					

Parents	155	12	9	1	7

School Council Meetings?

	Responses				
Times	0	1	2	3	4
Number of Parents	155	12	9	1	7

Assembly programs?

	Responses				
Times	0	1	2	3	4
Number of Parents	98	40	23	13	10

Conferences?

	Responses						
Times	0	1	2	3	4	5	10
Number of Parents	64	78	22	12	5	1	2

Parent Volunteer meetings?

	Responses		
Times	0	1	2
Number of Parents	173	8	3

Parent Volunteer workshops?

	Responses		
Times	0	1	2
Number of Parents	172	12	0

Classroom parties?

	Responses		
Times	0	1	2
Number of Parents	154	17	13

5. Did you use the calendars that were sent home each month with activities or places to go for each day of the month?

Responses	
Yes	191
No	16
Did not receive	10

6. Approximately how many of the activities did you do with your child? Please circle the number that

applies. *

Number of Activities	Number of Parents
25 or less activities	70
26 to 50 activities	100
51 to 75 activities	12
76 to 100 activities	5
100 or more activities	4

* 26 parents did not try any of the activities.

7. What is your opinion of the monthly activities calendars? *

Responses	Number of Parents
A waste of time	2
Helpful	71
Very helpful	94

* 24 parents did not respond.